



My worries are rational, climate change is not: Habitual ecological worrying is an adaptive response

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Abstract:

Qualifications such as "global warming hysteria" and "energy policy schizophrenia" put forward by some climate change skeptics, usually outside the academic arena, may suggest that people who seriously worry about the environment suffer from psychological imbalance. The present study aimed to refute this thesis. While habitual worrying in general is strongly associated with psychopathological symptoms, in a survey a near-zero correlation was found between habitual ecological worrying and pathological worry. Instead, habitual ecological worrying was associated with pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors, and with a personality structure characterized by imagination and an appreciation for new ideas. The study had sufficient statistical power and measures were valid and reliable. The results confirm that those who habitually worry about the ecology are not only lacking in any psychopathology, but demonstrate a constructive and adaptive response to a serious problem. In the public domain, these findings may contribute to a more rational and less emotional debate on climate change and to the prevention of stigmatization of people who are genuinely concerned about our habitat and are prepared to do something about it ("habitual worriers are not crazy"). In the academic arena this study may contribute to environmental psychology ("habitual worrying is part of a green identity"), as well as to the literature on worry and anxiety ("habitual worrying can be a constructive response").

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3762778>

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Unspecified Exposure

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Europe

European Region/Country: European Country

Other European Country : England

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Mental Health/Stress

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Stress Disorder

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Resilience:

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified